




STATE
NORMAL
SCHOOL
FARMVILLE, VA.

MARCH, 1919

M.E. Granger

THE FOCUS



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THE FOCUS

VOL. IX

FARMVILLE, VA., MARCH, 1919

NO. 1

A Prayer

LORD, help me as on life's way I go
True friendliness to all to show,
Knowing each day, the portion passed
By time, who ever travelth fast,
May be recalled not by Thy might,
Nor steps turned back to do the right.

Help me to be a friend of use
To all who suffer trial, abuse;
A friend of joy to all hearts glad;
A friend of comfort to those sad;
And make my perfect tribute be
Loving service, Lord, to Thee.

—A. O. M.

The Eternal Feminine

KENNETH was bored. He had studied conscientiously for half an hour. Now he needed recreation. His glance swept idly over the other children in the fifth grade room. Strangely enough they were all deep in the pages of the history book. Miss Allen had taken advantage of the quiet and was busily correcting arithmetic papers.

Thrown on his own resources for entertainment, Kenneth dug his hand deep into his trouser pocket and drew out a handful of corn. He fingered it speculatively for a moment. Directly in front of him sat Marjorie Norman. Kenneth held rather an exalted opinion of Marjorie. Of course she screamed when she saw a worm and indulged in many other feminine weaknesses that he held in contempt, but somehow these things did not seem altogether as silly in Marjorie as they did in other girls. She had such a sweet, appealing manner that Kenneth was always glad when he had the opportunity to protect her from any dreadful bugaboos—and incidentally to show off his own bravery.

Acting on a generous impulse Kenneth divided his corn in two parts and leaning over his desk he laid half in a little heap on Marjorie's desk. Marjorie glanced at him through her curls and smiled shyly, but not in the least comprehensively. Pocketing his own corn Kenneth settled back in his seat and buried himself in his history book.

A minute later something whizzed within an inch of Miss Allen's head, hit the blackboard and rebounded on her desk. It was a grain of corn.

"Who shot that corn across the room?" Miss Allen's voice was sharp, imperative. The children in the fifth grade room glanced at each other inquiringly but no answer came. Miss Allen rose from her

seat. "I mean to know," she said firmly. Still no answer. Miss Allen walked to the front desk. "Henry, did you throw that corn?" Henry made prompt and emphatic denial. She advanced to the next desk. Kenneth's heart gave a spasmodic turn. So she meant to question them individually. It never occurred to Kenneth to tell anything but the straight truth when his turn came, but he wasn't feeling exactly comfortable.

Miss Allen had reached the desk just before him. "Marjorie, did you—?" Her eyes fell on the little pile of corn. "Marjorie, you will remain after school," she snapped. Kenneth half rose from his seat and opened his mouth, but no sound came.

"The rest of you are excused." Miss Allen's voice was icy. She managed to make them all feel guilty. The children gathered up their things and quietly left the room, Kenneth with them. Outside the door he paused. He was not afraid of what Miss Allen might do to him. He felt as if he would gladly bear any punishment to get Marjorie out of this, but a strange embarrassment held him back. And—horrible thought—did Marjorie think he had put that corn on her desk to shift the blame from himself?

Inside, Miss Allen was saying, "Marjorie, I'm very much mortified that you should have done such an unlady-like thing, and then to tell a story about it! What have you to say for yourself?" Marjorie did not raise her eyes. She was nervously tracing a pattern on the sun-flecked floor with the toe of her shoe.

"Well?" Miss Allen's voice was sharp. Still no answer. Marjorie's lip trembled piteously.

The door opened wide and Kenneth entered. "Miss Allen, I, I sh-shot that corn." Kenneth made his confession haltingly, his hands deep in his pockets, and his eyes glued to the floor. He was making a desperate effort to appear nonchalant.

"Kenneth! and you let Marjorie take all the blame?" Miss Allen's voice expressed shocked incredulity. Kenneth stared at the floor as if he expected to find

something written there that he might offer as an excuse for his very ungallant conduct. He did look pathetically unhappy. In spite of herself Miss Allen's expression softened.

"Well, Kenneth, I'm glad you were man enough to own up to it anyway. Now promise me you will never again bring another grain of corn to school. Will you?"

"Yes'm, I promise."

"Well, you may go. Marjorie, I'm sorry I misjudged you. You may go too."

Kenneth waited on the steps for Marjorie. He meant to tell her on the way home what a trump he thought she was.

The door opened and Marjorie brushed by without even a glance in Kenneth's direction. Now it was over she wanted worse than anything else to have a good cry. Kenneth should never see her cry!

Kenneth looked after her, despair on his face. He didn't know what to say and he didn't know what to do; so he walked on behind her disconsolately.

That night Kenneth was working his arithmetic—at least his book lay open before him and he was chewing his pencil contemplatively. In the adjoining room his father and Dr. Henderson were holding an animated conversation over their game of chess.

"I tell you," Dr. Henderson was saying, "a woman will stand a great deal from a man if he will only let her on to the game. Don't take for granted she understands things; tell her about them. Make her a partner, and she will stick to him through thick and thin. Why, I knew of a criminal's wife—"

But Kenneth did not hear any more. The perplexed expression slowly left his face and he fell to working his arithmetic.

The next morning he alarmed his mother by hurrying off to school without waiting for her usual admonition, "Kenneth, you'll be late. Do hurry."

At the corner he waited until Marjorie reached her gate. Then he walked rapidly until he overtook her.

"Lo, Marjorie!"

"Hello, Kenneth."

Neither of them could think of anything else to say. Kenneth put his hand into his book bag and drew out a fist tightly closed over something which he deposited in Marjorie's bag.

"We'll pepper 'em right today, Marjorie," he said.

Marjorie was frightened by Kenneth's audacity, but a happy little tremor ran through her that he should have chosen her for an accomplice.

"But, Kenneth, you promised Miss Allen you would not bring any more corn to school," she reminded him gently.

Kenneth looked at her reproachfully. "That ain't corn." His voice held a hurt note, that she should even suspect him of breaking his word. Reaching into his bag for another handful he held it up for her to see.

"Them's beans," he said triumphantly.

—*Kathleen Gilliam.*

The Rose of No Man's Land

AFTER days and days of battle,
When we're worn out, tired, and blue,
And the rain and mud of No Man's Land
Has chilled us through and through;

There is not much thought of comfort,
We aren't looking for that yet,
But before our gloomy vision
Comes a sight we'll ne'er forget.

Just a bright and smiling lady
With a face like angels bright,
And the crimson cross of mercy
Shining on her garment white.

And we know she comes to cheer us,
With her faith and courage grand,
And silently we thank our God
For this Rose of No Man's Land.

—*Eunice Watkins.*

"Unto the Least of These"

(A True Story with a Moral.)

THE little, dark moving-picture house was rapidly being filled. With each newcomer the stuffy air grew more stuffy with the odor of cheap perfume and peanuts. Norma Talmadge was the attraction tonight, and her vivid, dark beauty drew not only all the stage-struck girls in town, but also most of the boys of the susceptible, sentimental age.

The girls were seated near the front of the room, their heads close together over bags of peanut brittle and chocolate creams. A good many boys were standing backed against the walls, making audible comments on the girls as they drifted aimlessly in.

The already dim room grew darker, the first flash of light fell on the screen. There was a general straightening in seats, a sudden silence, then a quick chorus of "Ah's" greeted the appearance of the universal favorite. The audience settled down to a blissful absorption, that was now and then broken into by a hysterical titter from some irrepressible. Presently the door opened, throwing a stream of light across the picture and bringing forth an irritated protest from the crowd.

The disturber, a long-limbed, khaki-clad chap, stood a moment, hesitantly, inside the door, spied a seat on the back row and proceeded to step over the back of it and sit down. He then rumaged in his pocket for gum, put a piece in his mouth and gazed interestedly at his neighbors. The picture he had seen before. He was bored, almost wished he had stayed at the pool-room.

He stretched, and bumped a hard elbow into his right-hand neighbor. His neighbor moved with a little protesting "oh" that proved it was a girl. The boy peered at her through the half dark, evidently saw

something that pleased him, and felt instantly less bored.

"Hello, chicken," he ventured and met with instant success. "Hello, yourself," she returned, and the boy promptly moved over nearer.

"Scuse me for bumping you," he sought to prolong the conversation in a half whisper. "If I'd seen how pretty you are I'd been more careful."

"Oh, would you? But you can't see now." She giggled a little and the boy put his hand on the chair arm between them, encountered hers, and both withdrew their hands with low, embarrassed laughter that made them feel more intimate.

For a time they were silent. The small boy that served in the capacity of an inefficient chaperon to the girl, peered around his sister once or twice curiously, then fell asleep with his rough head against her thin shoulder. Presently the girl spoke again, moving over until her arm touched the strong, warm arm in the khaki sleeve.

"Where you been in camp?"

The boy offered her a piece of gum and began a confidential discourse. "I been at camp L—. Don't live near here though; live in B—. Used to work in a store at home. Gosh, I'm glad to be out! We got treated good, but 'twas too lonesome. Going home tomorrow. Am I glad? Now you're talking, kiddo."

"I'm glad you didn't go tonight," offered the girl.

"Huh? Oh," he caught her meaning. "Me too. What for a town is this, girlie?"

"Bum," she answered fervently. "Only when the soldiers come through we have fun." She did not add that her social status prevented any real fun with the nice element of the town.

The boy drew away stiffly. "So you talk to all the soldiers that come through town?"

"I don't—I don't," she protested. "I never spoke to one before."

The boy grinned unbelievably in the darkness. "Well, don't you," he advised. "Some of 'em ain't worth rats if they are Uncle Sam's men."

He leaned nearer, caught a breath of the cheap powder on the girl's face, and put an arm around the back of her seat. Thus they sat through the rest of the picture. The girl fairly trembled with happiness. At last she, the neglected, wistful daughter of the town's poorest family, had what all the other girls had—a soldier. The way she got him bothered her simple brain not at all, neither did the fact that she did not know his name.

As for the boy, satiated with the presence of men, she was woman, with whom it was pleasant to spend an otherwise boring hour.

So they sat in contented silence until the last picture was thrown on the screen, a close up of the lovely Norma and her lover in a village scene that suddenly reminded the boy of the village and the girl he had left behind him.

The lights flashed on and the boy rose, withdrawing his arm abruptly. The girl rose, too, shaking her little brother into reluctant wakefulness. At the door she waited, obviously for the soldier, but he moved past her with a careless "Bye, kid," that sent a resentful wave of color over the powdered childish face.

Then he was gone, with a swing of his broad shoulders, down the brightly lighted street, and the girl, clutching the hot, moist hand of the stumbling little brother, moved away down a darkened side street.

Next morning the dingy little station that the small town boasted was completely deserted except for hurried visitors. This did not indicate that there were less passengers than usual for the 10.18, in fact there were more, but the outside world was too fragrant with early morning freshness, and the sunshine on the station platform was too alluring to be exchanged for a dreary waiting room redolent with the odor of stale tobacco. Several girls were strolling arm in

arm, their fresh, dainty dresses making vivid spots of color in the sunlight.

Another girl stood in the station doorway. Her suit was a loudly checked one, she wore no hat and the breeze had whipped out rough little curls that showed a woeful lack of shampoo and brush. She wore French-heeled slippers and the cheapest of silk hose. Her blouse was shazy flesh color, and out of it her young neck showed distressingly thin. And her face—God pity such faces as hers; wistful, pretty because of its youth, rouged and powdered, with a daring look put on to cover a longing for what other girls had by right and what she, by wrong, was denied.

A group of soldiers rounded the corner of the depot, came on to get their tickets, and the girl, tremblingly, lifted her eyes. There he was, her soldier. Surely for this farewell sight of him it was worth while rising early to wash out her waist and steal out with the breakfast dishes unwashed. The soldiers came closer, she opened her lips to speak—they were gone, laughing lightly, cigarettes in their hands. And while she stood, in unbelieving astonishment, they had passed her again and were idling and smoking in the sunshine, outside. Surely he had not recognized her; it was quite dark in that theater last night.

She took courage to leave the doorway, and moving slowly on her high-heeled pumps, passed near the boys. This time the boy, leaning lazily against a truck, turned a casual gaze her way, looked the tawdry, hesitant little figure over, and took a careless draw at his cigarette.

"Darn this town anyway," he said in sudden disgust, to a companion.

The train was in the block, another moment and the soldiers were swinging themselves up the steps. The girl, lifting eyes that had the look of a hurt child, looked into the train windows. A tall, khaki-clad youngster sprawled into his seat with never a backward glance at the town. The train was gone.

Gone, and the girl? Her name is Legion. Only a small-town girl without a chance, as innocent of wrong-doing as a kitten, imitating, in every way possible to her limited resources, the ways of those above her, and erring because of her ignorance.

The moral? "She who runs may read."

—*Anna Penny.*

The Spirit of Spring

THE season of Spring breathes forth the very essence of hope, life and love—the love of God for man, the love of man for God and fellowman. From the first faint beginnings of Spring when “beechen buds begin to swell,” when its approach is heralded by the blithe little bluebird with its cheer-up, cheer-up song, we see hope, the promise of things to come. Then as the leaves put forth from the bare branches and buds burst into blossom, we see the fulfillment of hope in the revelation of abundant life.

Who can look upon the wonderful beauties of Spring, the bleak wintry world reclothed in fresh verdure and new life, without a realization of the Divine Creator and without reverence for this manifestation of Himself through His workmanship? In what more beautiful way could He have taught us the great principle of immortality than through this awakening of Nature; or how could He have taught us a fuller conception of the human soul, of its value and eternal existence, than through these lessons? How could we ever have been prepared for the reception of the crowning resurrection of His Son without this knowledge of Nature?

In no way could God have made more real to us the sense of His love and care than through the gift of the lovely spring blossoms, the crocuses, hyacinths and violets in all their beauty and fragrance, blossoms so delicate that they are broken and withered by the slightest blow upon their slender stems. He careth for them that “toil not” nor spin. How much greater must be that love and care for us? The nature of man must respond in joy and gratitude to these wonderful tokens of His love and to these evidences of His direction and guidance of all Nature and the world at large.

All the world is happier in Spring. The children's laugh is merrier in their play as they feel in their own way the joys of the season and find a childish delight in the bright flowers, the warm sunshine and gayly flitting butterflies. The poet tells us that then "a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." Youth feels the buoyancy and radiance of Spring, the spirit of promise, of fuller joys and a richer life. Maturity brings with it a broader conception of the meaning of the season and of its relation to life, while ripe old age adds the crowning interpretation—that of eternity typified in the season of Spring.

Spring is brimming with joy, with inspiration and promise for each of us. It bids us forget the past and reach out for the best that the future may have in store. We know that

"The year's at the spring,
The day's at the morn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world!"

—S. R. W., '20.

The Little Boy Who Visited the Interior of the Earth

“SHIPS and people can get down through the water, can't they?” asked my little brother one night as I was putting him to bed.

“Yes,” I answered.

“Then why can't they get through land?”

Not knowing how to answer him, I said, “I heard of a little boy who went through the land.”

“Oh, tell me about him,” he begged.

“Well, once upon a time there lived a little boy named Tommy. Tommy's father was dead, and his mother had to work hard to get money to buy enough food and clothing for herself and Tommy. Since Tommy didn't have any drums and engines and rocking-horses to play with, he played that he was a gardener. He helped his mother take care of the garden and make the flowers grow and she would then take them to the city and sell them.

“One day as Tommy's mother was coming from the city, she met a little old man who asked her for some money with which to buy something to eat. She did not have very much money because she could not sell all of her flowers, but nevertheless she gave the man half of what she had.

“‘Thank you, madam,’ said the old man. ‘You are very kind. In return for your kindness take this.’ He gave her what appeared to be an apple seed about as large as an egg. ‘Plant this and see what will happen.’

“Tommy's mother hurried home and planted the large seed. Every day Tommy went out into the garden to see if the plant had come up; and when it did, he took care of it and saw that no weeds kept it from growing larger.

"One day as he was pulling up weeds, he fell over; and in an attempt to raise himself, he caught hold of the plant and pulled it up.

"Oh, what shall I do? What will mother say?" he cried.

"Don't worry about that. This is the best thing that could have happened to you," said a voice.

"Tommy looked up and around but he could not see anyone.

"Here I am, the plant you have in your hand," said the voice.

"Tommy looked in wonder, and as he looked the plant changed to a tiny old man.

"How would you like to go down deep in the earth and see the sights there?" asked the little man.

"I should love it, but how could I get down there?"

"Why, don't you see that hole there?"

"Then for the first time Tommy noticed a hole in the earth just large enough for a boy his size to go through. He looked down into the hole, but it was pitch dark and he could see nothing.

"Well," said the old man, "if you are going we had better start. Put your feet in the hole and then let yourself go. Don't be afraid."

"Tommy did as he was told, and for a long time he felt himself going down, down, down in this great dark hole. Finally it began to get lighter, and at last he landed lightly on his feet in what appeared to be a big field.

"This is the center of the earth and the home of the flower fairies. Come, let me take you to them," said the little old man.

"They walked to the end of the field and came to a large wall. The little man clapped his hands and the wall opened and they went in. They found themselves in a large and beautiful garden. Tommy thought this the most peculiar garden he had ever seen, and indeed it was a funny garden. The flowers, instead of staying in one place and keeping quiet, were playing and dancing and laughing and singing. There were

roses and lilies and daisies and violets and all of the other flowers.

" 'This is where the flowers live who have not yet been to the land of the mortals. You see they are happy and gay for they have not yet felt how it is to be plucked and torn to pieces by some careless mortal. Come, let us join them.'

"They went up to where most of the fairies were playing and the little man introduced Tommy to them.

" 'Oh, tell us about the place you live in. It isn't really as bad as the others say it is, is it? Bad girls and boys do not destroy the flowers, do they?'

"How Tommy wished that he could say that he at least had never harmed a flower in his life. Nevertheless he determined then and there that never again would he harm a flower, and he said, 'Beautiful flowers, if you will grow in my garden, I'll never let anyone harm you, and you may stay there as long as you like and enjoy the beautiful sun and the sweet songs of the birds.'

" 'We'll grow in your garden, Tommy,' promised the flowers. 'Now come and race with us.'

"Tommy played with them for some time and then the little man came up to him and said, 'Come, Tommy, we must not stay here any longer, as I have more to show you.'

"He then led Tommy to another garden where there were more flowers. These flowers, however, were not dancing and running about like the others. Most of them were sitting in circles talking.

" 'These are the flowers who have been to your land. They too were merry and gay like the other flowers and eager to leave their homes, but they came back faded and wiser flowers than before. They spend their days telling of their experiences. Some of their stories are sad, some funny and some happy. But we have no time to stop to hear their stories as it is time to start back and I wish to show you some of the places you passed when you came here but which you could not see on account of the darkness. Here, take this

stone in your hand and say, 'To the land of the minerals.'

"Tommy did so and suddenly everything became dark and he felt himself going up and up.

" 'Stop,' said the voice of the little man, and again Tommy felt himself on firm ground.

" 'What place is this?' asked Tommy.

" 'This is the land of coal. Coal is made of the trees and plants that grew on earth hundreds of millions of years ago before people lived there and when horses flew and snakes walked and monkeys were great big, much bigger than they are now. Let's ask this fellow here to tell us about what he used to see in those days.

" 'Hello, there, Mr. Coal, can you tell us something of what you used to see when you were a tree?'

" 'Why, how do you do? It is a long time since I saw you last. Who is that with you?'

" 'This is Tommy. He is such a good boy, and his mother is so kind that I decided to let him pay us a visit. Can you tell us something?'

" 'Oh, yes. Have you heard about the party the ant gave in honor of the lion?'

" 'No, tell it to us.'

"Then Mr. Coal told them about the party. He told them about Mr. Bear's bringing Mrs. Rat and Mr. Dog's bringing Miss Cat and Mr. Rabbit bringing Miss Fox and all about the other animals. He also told about the eating contest and about the discussion which arose as to who should get the prize and how the discussion led to a fight during which the dog climbed a tree, and the cat kept jumping up trying to get him, roaring at the top of her voice, and during which the lion hid from the rabbit and the rat ran after the tiger until finally the horse flew down from the top of the highest tree and settled the discussion to the satisfaction of all. They then went back and finished the party and had a good time.

"After the story was told, the little man took Tommy to the land of silver and gold and told him to

fill his pockets full of everything he could find loose, but not to break off anything. Tommy took all he could find, but this did not even fill one of his pockets. Nevertheless he did not break off any more even though he knew it would help his mother to bring her lots of silver and gold.

"After Tommy had picked up all he could find, the little man came up to him and said, 'Let me see what you have. Hm, you did just as you were told. That is right. You did not take what does not belong to you. Now you can take what does belong to you. Come.'

"Tommy again felt himself going up. This time he went up for a long time.

" 'Ouch, what's that?' he exclaimed as his head hit something.

"Well, Tommy, you are almost home. In fact, you are just under your own cellar. That against which your head bumped is an iron chest filled with gold and silver. It belongs to you. Your great grandfather buried it there years ago and died before he could tell anyone where it was.

" 'I shall take you out to the garden where we started from. Do not tell anyone where you have been but tell your mother that the old man whom she helped one day said that she should dig down three feet under the cellar steps, and she will find something. Now, good-bye, and remember.'

"The little man touched Tommy and he found himself pulling up weeds in his garden. He ran into the house calling, 'Mother, mother.'

" 'Why, Tommy, where have you been so long? I could not find you in the garden,' said his mother.

" 'Ah, mother, did I ever have a great great grandfather?'

" 'Yes, and I have heard that he had a great deal of money which he buried, but no one has been able to find it.'

" 'Mother, an old man said to me, go tell your mother that the old man she helped says she should

dig three feet under the cellar steps and she will find something! Come, mother, let's look,' cried Tommy excitedly.

" 'It won't do any harm,' said Tommy's mother. 'Come.'

"Tommy and his mother did look and they found what they were looking for, and from that day to this they have had everything they wanted."

"Is that all?" asked my little brother when I stopped.

"Yes," I replied.

" 'Oh, tell me some more about Tommy,' he exclaimed.

"Not tonight. Now go to sleep like a good boy. Good-night."

—*Ida Noveck.*

There's Many a Slip 'Twixt the Cup and the Lip

"**N**ATHER! Father!"

No answer.

"Oh! Mr. William Morris, Jr."

"Well, what do you want?" questioned Mr. Morris.

"Please tell me the time?"

"Seven thirty," he grumbled, "but next time consult the clock instead of me."

Marjorie rushed upstairs and called Marcelle to help her dress for the dance she was to attend that evening.

"Just think, only one more hour to dress in, and Mildred will surely be there by eight, all dolled up in that pink satin dress."

"Marcelle! Marcelle, are you going to help me dress any time tonight? You know I want to be there when Mildred arrives. It is nearly eight now, and I have just started to dress. Come on, sis, don't be so slow."

"Well, I am coming," exclaimed Marcelle. "Mother has a headache, and I have just fixed her medicine—but she is resting better now. Just don't scream so, I will be there in a minute."

"Why don't you come on and quit talking about it?" Marcelle entered the room to help her sister dress.

"There! There! please run and answer the phone. I know it is John. He is coming up after me when he gets his old car fixed. Tell him not to forget that Mildred and I are just crazy to meet Mr.—."

"Mr. who?"

"Never mind, he is just one of the young men I am going to meet tonight. He is perfectly handsome, but you would not think so. You know you never like anyone I am crazy about. That is your nature exactly."

Marcelle glided down the steps to answer the phone.

"Who was it?" called the voice from above. "Is he coming tonight? Don't you wish you could go? Well, when girls are only seventeen they should never be allowed to dance. Just wait until you are two years older, then you can go—but you will never be as popular as your big sis! I have even old Mildred beaten. Some day you will be glad to call me sister, when I catch that real rich, handsome looking chap. Mildred is wild about him, too, but I have a better chance than she. John has promised to bring him tonight. I wish you could see him. Wait until he calls; then I will introduce my little sister, for I am not afraid of you cutting me out."

"John will be here by eight-thirty. He and Mr. Kenneth are coming together," answered Marcelle when her older sister had given her time to speak. "Please be ready, I am going to read to father."

Marjorie finished her toilet, but sat idly in front of the dresser looking at herself. "Poor Mildred," she thought, "won't she be surprised to know I met him first."

Just then the door bell rang. "Marcelle! Marcelle! Go to the door. I am not quite ready. Tell John I will be there in a second."

Marcelle gently closed her book, and went to obey her orders. The guest proved to be Mildred instead of John. Walter, Mildred's escort, had been called away on business that evening, so she had decided to come over and go along with Marjorie and John—provided they did not care.

Poor Marjorie nearly lost control of herself. And to think Mr. Kenneth was coming and Mildred was going with them! This was the first time Mildred had not even been wanted.

Just then the bell rang again.

"Go to the door, Marcelle. I will be down in a minute."

Marcelle obeyed. This time it was John and Mr. Kenneth. Yes, the wonderful Mr. Kenneth Marjorie

had spoken of. Well he was one man that they both could agree on. Marcelle liked him very much.

John found his favorite piece and started the victrola. Marcelle was left to entertain Mr. Kenneth but only for a short time, for Marjorie and Mildred soon appeared. The couples then started for the dance, leaving poor Marcelle at home with mother, father and her thoughts.

A week passed, a week of excitement and gayety for Marjorie and Mildred. Marcelle still continued to stay at home and enjoy life, but quite in a different way.

Late that evening her sister ran into the house breathless.

"What is the matter? Did something frighten you?" exclaimed Marcelle—just then she remembered and instead of making any further inquiry she passed on.

Within five minutes a voice called from above. "Oh! sis! come here just a minute; I have a secret to tell you."

Marcelle came as usual. It was a special secret that could not be told with father and mother listening. Little did Marjorie dream that she already knew—such a thing had never occurred to her.

Before Marjorie could finish dressing the bell rang.

"Marcelle! Marcelle, please entertain him. I will be down in just a minute."

Time was always measured by minutes and seconds with her, even if it did elapse into an hour.

From that time on until Mr. Kenneth left for his home he was a frequent visitor. Poor Mildred had dropped out of the game for she had decided long ago that Marjorie had won. Everybody thought the same except Marcelle, James and her father, but they never expressed their thoughts and the world was none the wiser.

Nearly a year had passed when suddenly a telegram came addressed to "Miss M. Morris." It read:

"Arrive tomorrow at 10.30. We will leave for New York immediately after wedding. Our boat sails Friday for Europe. "James Kenneth."

Marjorie was dumbfounded. What could it mean? Why, he hadn't even written to her since his departure, although he came real often while he was here.

"Marcelle! Marcelle, please come here. I have just received a telegram from Mr. Kenneth! What—what can be the matter with him? I—I don't understand at all?"

Poor Marcelle, it was her time to blush. "Please hand it over to me, sis, for I guess I can understand his meaning."

—*Sethell Barcliff.*

A Bit of the Psychology of Human Nature

TWO figures stood leaning on the deck rail waiting with eager, strained eyes for the first sight of land. Over and around them, as the sun climbed higher and higher up the sky dispelling gradually the white morning mists, fell the shadow of the great mast. The woman shivered, drew her shawl closer about her shoulders, and placed her hand on the man's arm. His own hand closed over it, and leaning forward he looked down upon her fondly, the joy of satisfaction in possession in his gaze, and bending suddenly down, he kissed her upturned brow.

Together they watched until at length the fair shores of his country appeared, looming up across the intervening waters of the sea, and clasping her hand more tightly as it lay upon his arm, he exclaimed, "Home!"

Looking shyly up into his face, with eyes shining and voice a bit tremulous, she reiterated softly, "Ome!"

One word. But from its utterance what a story may be told! What a future read in that one accent! What an index, complete, infallible, it furnishes of the state of mind of the person uttering it, whether that person be rich or poor, of high or of low degree.

By his look, by the intonation of his voice, what the man really said was this:

"I am an American. I have married an English wife, and as a foreigner in our free country she will make my position in society secure. She is beautiful and will be sought after by the rich and the well-to-do class. By her influence she will help me to rise in the world. She will be a good mother to our children, and because she both loves, respects, and fears me, she will teach them to honor, revere and obey me. She will make me a good wife and keep for me a com-

fortable home. It is well for me that I toured England before I settled down. An American wife would not have suited me or built up my business interests."

(Notice the recurring refrain of "Me," "Me," "Me.")

Aloud the woman softly repeated, "'Ome!" Inwardly she thought:

"Ah, 'e is so good, so 'onorable, so 'igh-minded and noble. 'E will make me a good 'usband, and we shall be very 'appy. 'E will be a kind, indulgent father, and 'e will love 'is 'ome and family. Ah, 'e is so good! We shall be very 'appy, 'e and I!"

(Did you catch the refrain—"E," "E," "E"?)

Putting together the spoken word and the unspoken thought of each we have the following interesting study in the psychology of human nature:

"*Home!*"

"*'Ome!*"

"*Me!*"

"*'E!*"

—A. O. M.

"Consistency, Thy Name is Woman!"

MARY shut the door after her kimono-clad room-mate and began to brush her hair vigorously.

"I'm so glad you could spend the night with me, honey," she said. "It seems an age since I had a right good chat with you."

Martha, her visitor, nodded absently as she bent over to scrutinize a picture on the dresser.

"Yes, I've bushels of things to tell you. How'd you ever get your sweet room-mate to stay out tonight?"

Mary put the windows down with a bang and answered as she turned out the light, "I bribed her with a box of candy. Isn't she the limit? I certainly got stung when they put her in here. Don't you know she told Edith that we never talked about anything but boys!"

Martha sat up in the darkness and spoke indignantly. "Boys indeed! Why, that cadet I met Christmas told me I cared less about boys than any girl he ever met."

"Oh-o! Tell me about him," coaxed Mary. "Where did you meet him?"

"At sister's dance, and, dear, it was a case of love at first sight. He simply rushed me to death."

Mary leaned far over the side of the bed, reached out a long arm and triumphantly produced a box of candy.

"Here, have some," she invited. "Bob sent it and it's 'Whitman's'!"

"What color eyes has Bob?" questioned Martha interestedly as she selected her candy.

"Blue as the sky," returned Mary promptly. "His eyes are so blue they fill all my dreams. Do you know that quotation?"

"Hum," assented Martha, over a mouthful of candy. "I like brown eyes, myself. Have you seen the new clerk down town? I got some darling pink paper from him yesterday."

"I need some," answered Mary. "But Bob likes plain white. Have some more candy?"

Martha giggled. "You do well to say *more*. I've eaten several pounds already. Dick sends music instead of candy. I think I'll put him wise to this."

"I would," said Mary. "I wish you could have seen Wallace Reid in the 'Devil-Stone' yesterday. He was adorable. Couldn't you have slain that old teacher when she wouldn't excuse you to go? Just think, a week ago tonight I was eating a banana split with Bob."

"Mary!" exclaimed Martha in a tragical tone. "Do you realize that we have a test tomorrow on Hygiene? I'd forgotten every word about it."

"Why should I worry?" responded Mary calmly. "I'll never learn anything. Anyway Bob doesn't like smart girls. Do you want some more candy? I'm a fit subject for the Infirmary myself."

Martha yawned. "Oh, well, let's go to sleep and have our minds fresh in the morning. Your roommate makes me sick, saying we *always* talk about boys. Dick just detests girls who talk about boys all the time."

Very sleepily from Mary's side of the bed, "Bob does too! I—I wish—"

Then there was quiet in the room. Mary and Martha were asleep.

—Anna Penny.

The Test of Bravery

BOB DEAN was teasing his younger brother, Dick, about being a "Mamma's boy." He, Bob, was the living personification of bravery. Indeed, he was not afraid to poke his head out of the door at night.

While the two boys were arguing, their father came to the door, and said, "Boys, what do you say to a fishing trip today?"

Of course, they were all enthusiasm immediately. Well did they remember the raptures of angling; of lying on the bank and gazing down into the blue, limpid water. Hastily donning their boy scout uniforms, they went to the garden in search of worms to bait their hooks. It did not take them long to get an old tin can full of the slimy creatures. Each one provided himself with the necessary fishing tackle and their mother gave them a basket of lunch. Soon their father had the car ready, and so they started on their way.

They had gone about six miles, when suddenly the car stopped. In spite of all their efforts, they could not get it started. Mr. Dean told the boys that a farmer lived about two miles farther on. He sent them to find the house with instructions to 'phone to the garage to send them help.

Bob and Dick started out in a run. They decided to go through the field and woods in order to save time. When they were in the woods, they moved more slowly. They were fond of birds and trees. If the thought of fishing hadn't lured them on, they would probably have spent most of the morning seeking specimens of various kinds. It was not long until they reached the edge of the woods. They were surprised to find themselves once more on the road. There were no houses in sight except an old dilapi-

dated one. It stood beyond the woods in a cleared spot, and not a tree was near it.

"Is that the house Daddy was talking about?" asked Bob.

"Of course not, but let's see what it is like anyway." With these words Dick started on a run toward the house. Suddenly, he stopped and pointed to one of the windows of the second story.

Bob looked up. A white hand was placed against the window.

Now these boys had heard ghost stories about a haunted house that stood near a deep woods. They at once concluded that this was the place. Their first impulse was to run, then they thought that wouldn't be very much like boy scouts.

"I tell you, let us go in and see what is there," suggested Bob, who remembered his conversation of the morning, when he was teasing his brother about being a coward.

"Daddy's waiting, though," said Dick rather timidly.

"'Fraid cat. I knew you were scared of your shadow."

"Guess I'm no more afraid than you." Saying this, Dick walked manfully toward the house.

Bob followed. When they reached the door, they looked up at the window. The hand had disappeared. Dick pushed the door which creaked on its rusty hinges. A damp, musty odor greeted them. They drew back for a few minutes and listened. Everything was quiet. Bob stepped inside. There was no floor except the earth. In one corner was a rickety ladder that led to the room above. Nothing else could be seen except the bare walls.

Just as Bob had decided he had stayed long enough, Dick stepped past him and started toward the ladder. Bob pulled him back, but Dick's mind was made up. His brother had called him a "'fraid cat." Now, he would show him who was the hero. He was on the ladder, when a soft step was heard overhead. A

board creaked. A deep, hollow voice sounded from above, "Let's break a shingle over their heads."

That was enough. Dick nearly fell off the ladder. Bob had thrown the door wide open, and was running wildly across the vacant lot. Dick followed, yelling for their father at every step.

When they reached the road, they heard a shout behind them. Glancing frantically over their shoulders, they saw their father running toward them. When he came up he asked, with restrained laughter, "Well, boys, what is the matter? You are as pale as ghosts."

Dick saw a twinkle in his father's eye and glanced sheepishly at Bob.

"Dad, it was you. How did you get up there?"

"Yes, boys, it was I. Overhearing a conversation between you, in which you were discussing which was the braver, I thought I would take this means of settling the dispute. There is nothing the matter with the car. It is down the road a short distance. I stopped it so I could have a chance of getting into the house while you were coming through the woods. Both of you were much braver than I thought you would be. Now, we will hurry to the creek."

Both boys looked at each other and grinned.

—E. T.

THE FOCUS

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Editorial

THE FOCUS FOR 1919-20

Perhaps we have never stopped to realize just how large a part *The Focus* plays in our school life here. This is due to the fact that we have not had to do without it, because it has always received the loyal support of the school.

If we are to keep up the standard of our magazine everyone must help. We want your stories, poems, sketches, everything that brings to a focus the activities in school. Without the support of the school as a whole we cannot hope to have a magazine of which we are proud. It is up to *you* as readers and contributors of *The Focus* to make it what it should be.

The Focus must also have your financial support. If you are a subscriber and have not yet paid your subscription see to it that you do not let this fact slip your mind. If you are *not* a subscriber you are missing something vital in your school life. Hunt out the business manager, or give her a chance to hunt you, and tell her you can't do without *The Focus* any longer.

The new staff is eager to make this year a successful one. The editors of each department are ready to work, and work hard. What we ask of you is that you will help us make *The Focus* count; help us make it

worth while; help us to keep it a magazine of which the school may well be proud.

We feel sure that you will do this, as you have always done, and believe that we have every reason to expect a most successful year.

—*N. L.*

IN THE SPRING

Surely no season of the year is a happier one or has a deeper meaning than spring. It is the time of flowers, of the songs of birds and of the awakening and reviving of friendship and love. Everything seems to unfold and develop new life and spirit, and a voice from somewhere seems to call to us to come out in the sunshine and be happy.

There is something in the atmosphere that seems to bid us have a friendly word and a cheerful smile for everyone. But do we always heed that something and do its bidding? Do we take time to speak a kind word to those we meet? It is very easy to forget, when we have spring in our own hearts, that perhaps someone else may be blue and very much in need of sympathy or a friendly word. Let us remember that every one has not the chance to have as many friends as perhaps we have, and surely we know that the spirit of spring can mean so much more if we have someone with whom to share it. It is a very little thing to ask a girl who seems lonely to take a walk or go to prayers with you, but oh, it may mean so much to her, it may bring sunshine into her heart for days. Not only will it help her, but it will help us too, for the only way to be happy is to make other people happy and make them feel that someone cares and thinks about them.

So as spring is coming let us fill our heart with its spirit and so radiate it to those around us that it will not only last through the spring but always.

—*E. K. S.*

✦ ✦ ✦ **Here and There** ✦ ✦ ✦

Miss Ethel Gildersleeve, our Y. W. C. A. annual member, spoke to the student body on March 4, at the morning devotional exercises. She told of her recent trip to Evanston, Illinois, where she and Miss Woodruff, our Local Secretary, attended the Students Conference.

Miss Woodruff gave us some other phases of the Conference the following morning.

From the reports the whole theme of the Conference seemed to be the New World Democracy, and the part we as students shall play in it.

The annual election of the Y. W. C. A. officers was held at the regular meeting of the Y. W. C. A. on Wednesday evening, March 5.

The following officers were elected: President, Miss Ethel Gildersleeve; Vice-President, Miss Sarah Shelton; Corresponding and Recording Secretary, Miss India Sargent; Treasurer, Miss Mary Rucker; Annual Member, Miss Harriet Purdy.

Governor Westmoreland Davis addressed the farmers of Prince Edward County in the School Auditorium Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 26. The student body attended and as the girls greatly outnumbered the farmers present the Governor addressed many of his remarks to the students. It was an interesting and inspiring address, but the thing that seemed to elicit the heartiest applause was his statement that teachers should and would receive better pay in Virginia in the future.

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ **Hit or Miss** ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

Mrs. Bretnall—Since we have in our language such a great number of words, how do you account for the small vocabulary that most people use?

First Prof. Student—We have many words, but do not use a great number for fear of seeming too affectionate.

Student Teacher in American History—What public office did Benjamin Franklin hold?

Pupil—He was embosser to France.

Miss Kennedy in Third Year English—What is the keynote of the Vision of Sir Launfal?

Student—He who feeds himself with his arms, feeds three—himself, his hungry neighbor, and me.

Ethel—I wonder why Dorothy R. looked so pale this morning?

Mary—Because her hair was tucked under her hat.

Miss Randolph—Give some evidences of Charlemagne's greatness as a ruler?

Student—Well—er—his rule lasted a thousand years.

Polly (in a very solemn tone)—Isn't there some cure for this dreadful new sleeping disease?

Frances Thomas (with equal solemnity)—Yes, Miss Neill.

Mary—Why, I never have heard of this sleeping disease before, have you?

Louise—Oh, Mary! Don't you remember that Rip Van Winkle had it for twenty years?

New lights on the recent World War gleaned from War Course note-books:

"King Alex was a massacre."

"Germany donated (dominated) diplomatic policy."

"The religion of the Balkan States was slightly different from *Mohamadan*."

"Napoleon brought order out of Cayos (chaos)."

"Germany's demand for providence (provinces) was one of the causes of the war."

"There were no fortified forts in Belgium."

Miss Winston—How is tin chloride used?

Brilliant pupil—It is used as a mordant.

Miss Winston—Well, what does that mean?

Brilliant pupil—It means something that you put on people after they are dead.

Miss Taliaferro—Explain the algebraic term, evolution.

Pupil—That's what tells us we came up from monkeys.

AFTER DINNER MINTS AT THE BOOK ROOM

"Hasn't Janie Moore the cutest curl?"

"Get into line, and stop talking, girls."

"Oh! I wonder what my package can be?"

"It looks very much like a catalog to me."

"I hope mine is candy, or something sweet."

"All you girls think about is something to eat."

"Mine is a cape sister never has worn."

"Go iron your package-slip, it is wrinkled and torn."

"May I have Mary's package? She is sick with a cold."

"No. I wonder how often you'll have to be told."

"Oh! my 'Liza, Oh! my Liza Jane."

"Don't let me hear that singing again."

"There; it is books just as I told her."

"Get into line. Don't look over her shoulder."

"Here I am last. It makes me so mad."

"Is this really all of you? I certainly am glad."

✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ **Exchanges** ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦

One of our best exchanges for February is *The Bessie Tift Journal*. The literary department is unusually good, especially the poems. *In Far Japan* deserves special mention. It is well written and bears a striking resemblance to Kipling's *Mandalay*—which is saying a great deal for it. The magazine is good throughout and the only criticism, other than favorable, which we would offer is that the stories are more nearly sketches than they are stories. Otherwise it is an excellent number.

The Taj.—An interesting magazine. The editorials are good and the stories are clever—but why so few?

We gratefully acknowledge the following: *The Missile*, Petersburg High, Petersburg, Va.; *The Critic*, Lynchburg High, Lynchburg, Va.; *The Chathamite*, Chatham, Va.

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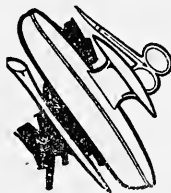


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